

**Talitha Kum Japan is a network group among Association of Major Superiors of Women Religious and Association of Major Religious Superiors in Japan in collaboration with J-CaRM (Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move) commissioned by CBCJ (Catholic Bishop Conference of Japan) to counteract trafficking in persons.**

*"Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ." – Pope Francis*

### "Talitha Kum(mi)"

One of the examples that has been written in the original language in the Bible is "Talitha Kum (mi)". It is said that Peter heard this word in the Aramaic language from Jesus which means "Little Girl, Arise!" as it is written in the Gospel of Mark 5:41. It was a word of love filled with dignity by the Son of God, which Jesus gave to Jairus, who was in pain when his 12-year-old daughter was dying.

As I reflected on this word, the reality in the Japanese society surprises me and even gives me feelings of anger when words and actions that eliminate the dignity of human beings are publicly exercised by individuals and organizations. The Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber pointed out that serious negligence today is hindering the personal relationship of "I and you" with the material relationship of "I and it." In reality, the human dignity of each human being who was created in the image of God is being treated like exchangeable goods by some people.

One Vietnamese technical intern trainee who was trained in basic Japanese in a very short time had his passport taken away by the company and was dispatched to a construction site right away. He experienced severe working conditions, salary reduction, unpaid salary and confiscation of WIFI, as well as violence and was threatened by the company president's son. In the midst of the problem, he got in touch with me through an acquaintance. Immediately after consulting with Talitha Kum Japan (J-CaRM), we took concrete measures patiently through legal experts. Eventually, he resigned from the construction company, returned to Vietnam and was able to pay his debts before leaving the country. He is now living a peaceful life in his own country. His case is an example of "Talitha Kum" to give dignity to human beings and to be able to arise again! ...*"There is nothing impossible with God."*

~ Fr. Isao Aoki (Marianist Father)- Member of the Steering Committee of Talitha Kum Japan

### English Speaking Group Workshop ~Awareness Campaign Against Trafficking in Persons~

Talitha Kum Japan, a subcommittee of J-CaRM, the Catholic Commission of Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move organized the very first English-Speaking Group workshop/seminar on the "20 Pastoral Action Points Towards the Global Compacts on Migrants and Refugees & Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking." The workshop was held on May 17, 2019 in Nicola Barre Convent at Yotsuya, Tokyo. This workshop was part of the semi-annual awareness campaign against human trafficking activity of Talitha Kum Japan. It was a privilege for us to have had a speaker from the Vatican, Ms. Naoko Maruyama of the Migrants & Refugees Section. The workshop was well attended by pastoral workers especially priests, sisters, lay missionaries, church leaders, NGO/NPO representatives and other parishioners concerned about migrants, refugees and people on the move. About fifty people from different dioceses, parishes and nearby prefectures participated in this workshop. Father Wenceslao Laguidao, OMI (TK steering committee member) gave the opening remarks and ended with Pope Francis's words; *"human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ."*

Sr. Abby Avelino, MM gave a brief introduction to the workshop with the twofold aim of 1) raising awareness on the issue of human trafficking and the situation of migrants and refugees in Japan, and 2) stimulating pastoral workers and parishioners to be deeply involved and concerned with concrete action and implementation of the four verbs: to welcome; to protect; to promote; and to integrate migrants and refugees and victims of human trafficking in local parishes, dioceses, community and society. She invited everyone to reflect on how, we, as Church can work together against trafficking and implement the 20 Pastoral Action Points and Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking (POHT) in our own dioceses, parishes, congregations and communities.

The workshop continued with the presentation and sharing of Sr. Maria Lang and Sr. Nida Indelible, CM speaking from their own experiences as they accompany the victims of human trafficking here in Japan. Many of these victims are technical intern trainees, Japanese Filipino Children (JFC) and Japanese language students. It's really heartbreaking to learn of the reality of many technical intern trainees who are victimized from trafficking, labor exploitation, harassment, fraud and so on. According to Sr. Maria Lang, it is a challenge to handle the pregnancy case of women technical interns. Many of them are torn between having an abortion in order to keep working to pay off their big debt back home or give up their internship.

Ms. Motoko Yamagishi, J-CaRM & TK Committee member, informed us of the new system for accepting foreign workers in Japan which was implemented on April 1st this year. She gave the historical background of how the Japanese government's policy of accepting foreign workers has evolved into the new visa status which is the "specified skilled worker". This "specified skilled worker" is a status of residence applicable to foreigners who work in jobs that require considerable knowledge of or experience in specified occupational fields like care giving, constructions and others of 14 categories. She talked about the revised immigration act and how this might affect foreign workers. This could be an extension of the technical intern training program. Or could this "specified skilled worker" be another form of the "disposable" system of workers? She expressed the need to continue lobbying for an acceptable policy of the Japanese government which guarantees the dignity and rights of migrants as "workers" and as "human beings".

Ms. Naoko Maruyama is the Regional Coordinator of East Asia and Southeast Asia of the Vatican's Migrants & Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. She gave us a brief summary and background of the M&R Section. She briefly summarized the 20 Pastoral Action Points and the 4- verbs in the church context: To Welcome – increasing safe and legal channels for migrants and refugees: To Protect- respect for each person's dignity and rights: To Promote – the need to promote integral human development: To Integrate – greater participation of migrants and refugees to enrich local communities. She said that the M&R Section encourages the Bishops' Conferences to disseminate and explain the twenty points to their dioceses, parishes and church organizations. *"Every Catholic should proactively engage in making societies more just, respectful and inclusive, eliminating all forms of exploitation, especially those that are most ruthless."* She provided information on how the Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking (POHT) has emerged and aims to put into action to eradication of human trafficking. Clips of videos of Pope Francis' teaching on the pastoral care of migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking were shown. It was very helpful and it broadened our knowledge of safe migration. She elaborated the official definition of trafficking based on the Palermo Protocol as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose



Ms. Naoko Maruyama of the M&R

of exploitation."

At the end, the participants were divided into six groups for sharing and discussion on how we currently practice the four verbs and realize the POHT. Many shared the challenge of "integration" due to language barriers, culture differences and mind set of local community of accepting foreigners in Japan. The importance of collaboration and enhanced networking are key points to implement the 20 Pastoral Action Points and the POHT.

Many participants found this workshop very interesting and hope to learn more about this topic for the implementation into their own parishes, communities and congregations. This workshop was also a good occasion for many to enjoy a reunion with friends and associates! Some people expressed that the time was too short to cover the topics. They are hoping for a follow-up workshop regarding the 20 Pastoral Action Points and POHT in the future.

Sr. Junko Shioya, A.C.I. , chairperson of the Talitha Kum Japan closed the workshop with expressions of encouragement and deep hope for the implementation of this topic and dissemination of information into our own local communities and parishes.



Participants during the small groups session.

## Case Report of Pregnant Technical Intern Trainee

Talitha Kum Japan provides emergency financial assistance support for victims of human trafficking for shelter expenses, emergency assistance, living expenses, prosecution or legal case, interpretation/translation expenses, etc. We are most grateful for your generous donation to support the victims of human trafficking. Among the cases that we supported recently, we would like to give you report about the case of the Vietnamese technical intern. ~

### **A Vietnamese intern who was forced of having an abortion or forced to return home**

Ms. A came to Japan in October 2018 as a technical intern trainee from Vietnam. She was planning to take a one-month training course at the training center in Chiba Prefecture and practice the special skills at a paper-making company in Ehime Prefecture. However her physical condition changed during the training period and she found out that she was two months pregnant when she visited the hospital. After knowing that she was pregnant, the receiving company and the sending agency told to her "Abort or I will send you back home." Ms. A, being a Catholic could not think of having an abortion. On the other hand, she owed about 100 million yen to the sending organization before coming to Japan, so she could not think of going home in order to pay her debt. She was torn between giving up her internship or having an abortion to keep working to pay off her debt. She asked for help from Sister Maria Le Ti Lang, a Vietnamese nun through a text message SNS. Sister Maria Lang, who is a member of Talitha Kum Japan, consulted with other members of Talitha Kum Japan. Ms. A was rescued from the company and was able to stay in the convent as a safety measure.

Ms. A hoped to continue the technical intern training as originally planned and to continue her pregnancy as well. We consulted and requested with the Zentouitsu Workers Union in Tokyo to make an effort for a possible solution in her case. The negotiation between her case and the company began in the labor union.

While the union was in collective bargaining with the company, it was found that there was a clearly illegal and discriminatory arrangement between the sending organization and herself "in case of chronic disease, AIDS, and pregnancy etc. the technical intern should be forced repatriation." As a result of negotiation between the labor union and the company, Ms. A was able to continue the technical intern training as desired and moved from the shelter to the paper-making company at Ehime Prefecture. Currently, she returned to Vietnam for a while until the baby is born.

### **A warning was issued regarding "adverse handling of pregnant technical interns"**

It is a natural right to be able to continue the technical training even if the intern trainee gets pregnant, but it is obvious that in the technical training system the reality is that the natural right and protection of women are not available.

Based on the case of Ms. A, the national network organization of the foreigner support group requested and advocated to the Ministry In-charge for the protection rights of the pregnant technical interns. On March 11, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare issued a notice on the "adverse handling of pregnant technical interns" and the warning was issued to allow pregnant women to continue technical training safely. According to the law; "It is illegal and unacceptable for supervisory organizations and employers to force (foreign technical) trainees to return to their home countries against their will on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth and marriage."

In the case of Ms. A, we, the Talitha Kum Japan provided rescue assistance for her safety and assistance for shelter expenses under temporary protection, etc. In order to prevent anyone from being forced into abortion or forced to return to their home country, we would like to actively work on raising awareness on the rights of pregnant technical interns in the future and commit to strengthening the emotional accompaniment and other necessary support. ~ Motoko Yamagishi - Member of the Steering Committee of Talitha Kum Japan

## Update Civil Case Report of the 15 Filipino Students (Ryugakusei)

This is an update on the civil case of fifteen (15) Filipino students coming from B Language School in the Phils. who were sent to M Language School in Kyoto for further language studies. Together with 5 companions from Indonesia and Sri Lanka, they were deceived and forced to work for more than 28 hours a week and treated unjustly... (detailed information was published on the previous TK newsletter).

In September 2018, Talitha Kum Japan provided financial assistance for the airfare of one of the students who had to appear in court. The church and convent in Kyoto took care of her accommodation while she was in Japan. After two years of court hearings, the Judges

**JULY 30**

## **World Day Against Trafficking**

The 2019 World Day against Trafficking in Persons invites us to accompany with prayer and our efforts the commitment of the Talitha Kum International Networking to end human trafficking. Let us give light to freedom by fighting slavery.

Let us pray:

When we hear children, women and men being deceived and taken to unknown places for sexual exploitation, forced labor and organ trade, our hearts feel indignation and our spirits suffer, because their dignity and rights are violated by threats, deceit and violence.

Oh God, help us fight against all forms of slavery. Together with St. Josephine Bakhita we ask you to put an end to human trafficking.

Give us the wisdom and strength to be close to those who have been wounded in their body, heart and spirit, so that together we may reach the promise of life and tender and infinite love that you offer to our exploited brothers and sisters.

Touch the hearts of those responsible for this serious crime and support our commitment to freedom, your gift for all your sons and daughters. Amen.



suggested as a settlement of the 3 cases. M School has to pay and refund the students for their salaries and tuition fees. If both parties will agree for the amount of the settlements, it will be finalized in the next court hearing in June 2019. Hopefully, justice will prevail and this will serve as a lesson to prevent trafficking or illegal recruitment. ~ Sr. Nida Indelible, CM- Kyoto/TK-Japan Steering Committee member

## **Talitha Kum International Networking Update**

~ Sr. Abby Avelino, MM - Member of the Steering Committee of Talitha Kum Japan

On March 9, there was a live interview and presentation of Sr. Gabriella Bottani, SMC (Talitha Kum International Coordinator) via "zoom" conference about the accomplishments and update of the network for the last 10 years.

This year 2019 is very important as the network is celebrating the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum. The celebration began with a special prayer of intention by Pope Francis via YouTube last February 8, 2019 (World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking) calling us to pray for all the victims of human trafficking and any form of violence. The letter of Convocation of the 2019 General Assembly of Talitha Kum was sent to all members of the Talitha Kum networks with pertinent information. There will be 86 delegates from all over the world who will represent the networks at 2019 General Assembly of Talitha Kum to be held in Rome from 21st to 28th September 2019.

The maximum number of delegates from each region/continent including the members of the International Coordination Committee as follows: Oceania: 4 persons; Europe: 10 persons; Asia: 19 persons; Middle East: 2 persons; Latin America: 18 persons; North America: 10 persons; Africa Sub-Saharan: 15 persons; North Africa: 1 person; TK International: 1 person. The theme of the General Assembly is "Together Against Human Trafficking- Weaving a Web in Love."

Sr. Junko Shioya, ACI and Sr. Abby Avelino, MM will be the delegates from TK Japan.

The database and the annual survey (2019) of the Talitha Kum activities were completed and submitted for the presentation at the UISG General Assembly (May 6-10) and at the TK Assembly in September 2019. The areas of activities refer to the Palermo Protocol (prevention, protection, prosecution, partnership).

The Talitha Kum Southeast Asia and East Asia Conference will be held in June 2020 in Indonesia. The TK coordinators from Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Philippines will gather by the end of July 2019 for the planning and logistics of the TK Southeast Asia and East Asia conference.

The Migrants and Refugees Section (from Vatican), a partner of Talitha Kum, released the Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking (POHT) that was approved by the Holy Father. The orientations (POHT) are for use by dioceses, parishes and religious congregations, schools, etc. as a guide to eradicate human trafficking.

~ "TOGETHER AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING- Weaving a Web in Love" ~

[We thank you for your generous financial support for Talitha Kum Japan. Your donation will be used to provide support for victims of human trafficking for shelter expenses, living expenses, legal case work, translation/interpretation expenses, Newsletter, Seminars and Workshops Awareness Program] ~Japan Post Bank money transfer form is available at J-CaRM Secretariat office. Please fill in for "Talitha Kum Japan". Remittance charge is covered by J-CaRM.~

Talitha Kum Japan (Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move (J-CaRM))

Japan Catholic Center 2-10-10 Shiomi, Koto-Ku, Tokyo, Japan 135-8585 Tel:(81)03-5632-4441 Fax:(81)03-5632-7920 [jcarm@cbcj.catholic.jp](mailto:jcarm@cbcj.catholic.jp)